

LEARNING SUPPORT POLICY DOCUMENT FOR THOSE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (ALTERNATIVE LEARNING NEEDS), LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND DISABILITY

The school is developing its response to new SEND Code of Practice 2014 and recent legislation. This document details our current approach to supporting pupils.

Related Policies

- SENDA Accessibility Plan
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Gifted and Talented Provision
- Teaching and Learning Guide

Date implemented January 2012

Date of last review: September 2014; January 2015; September 2017

SENDA Responsible Person: Helen Tebay, Pastoral Deputy
SEN co-ordinator: Alison Maynard, Head of Learning Support
SEN Governor: Eliza Ecclestone

Relevant definitions

Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. Children have a learning difficulty if they:

- a) Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or
- b) Have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age.

(Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, August 2014)

Definitions under the Disability Discrimination Act, 1995 and 2005¹:

"Someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities". Disabilities include: mobility difficulties, visual or hearing impairment, severe disfigurements, mental health conditions such as depression, schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, learning disabilities and difficulties, cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, HIV, MS.

A. Objectives and Aims

We offer to the whole school support and expertise to help resolve difficulties and promote positive solutions for pupils experiencing barriers to their learning. We aim to follow a graduated approach of Assess Plan Do and Review as recommended by the SENDA Code of Practice 2014. We employ a range of strategies to achieve this including:

- Identification and assessment of individual needs
- Designing individual learning programmes
- Advising and working with colleagues (academic and pastoral)
- Liaising with external agencies
- Communicating with parents

We are committed to equal opportunities and although not compulsory for independent schools, we believe it is good practice to show due regard in our work, policy and procedures to SENDA 2001 and to SEND 2014. We are committed to making reasonable adjustments for students with disability and Learning Difficulties in line with the Equality Act 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014.

B. Admissions

The School believes that the community is enriched by its ability to attract a wide variety of pupils from varied backgrounds and with varied talents. Our policy on special needs fully complements this belief. We welcome

applicants with learning difficulties, or other disabilities, to the school.

Admission to Sevenoaks School is via a selective entry procedure in which we choose those we judge the most able candidates of those applying to us. The main criteria on which selection is based are:

- academic ability
- co-curricular potential (sport, music, art, drama, etc.)
- personal qualities, allowing a pupil to contribute to and benefit from what the school has to offer.

We will consider an application and in our selection make appropriate allowances and adjustments for disability and/or special educational needs where reasonably possible, although we do not set out to be a school with specialist expertise or provision in this area. We have reasonable provision for wheelchair access throughout the campus.

The suitability of the competitive and demanding working environment of the School has to be considered for pupils with disabilities or learning difficulties, as indeed it does for all applicants. The School must feel reasonably sure that it will be able to educate and develop the prospective pupil to the best of his or her potential and in line with the general standards achieved by the pupil's peers, so that there is every chance that the pupil will have a complete, happy and successful school career and emerge a confident, well-educated and well-rounded adult. These criteria should continue to be met throughout the pupil's time at the School.

At all times our primary consideration will be the best interests of the child. Thus, if after reasonable adjustments and provision have been made, a child does not reach the standard of the other applicants for the place, or we feel that as a school we do not have, and cannot reasonably have appropriate resources available to meet the needs of a child, we will not offer a place to that child.

Any enquiries related to admissions should be addressed to The Head of Sixth Form Admissions (for admission at 16) or the Director of Admissions (for admission at 11 or 13).

C. Identification, Assessment and Monitoring of Individual Needs

Before admission to the School, parents and teachers of prospective students will be asked to identify any Learning Support needs or Physical Disability through the use of a Learning Support Questionnaire. Any Educational Psychologist's report or relevant documentation should be attached to this.

The Head of Learning Support interviews prospective candidates *and their parents* to the school alongside the Admissions department when relevant. (*See Appendix*)

Screening

Once admitted to the school there will be further screening for any sPLDs:

- A spelling screening test (WRAT 3) during Year 7, and a further one during Year 9 may identify any underlying dyslexic-type difficulties. These are conducted by HGS within English lessons.
- The MidYIS tests in Year 9 may also identify students with alternative needs.
- The Cambridge Aptitude test in Year 11 is used to further cross-reference and check for any unusual profiles of strength and weakness.
- A screening test at the beginning of Year 12 for students with English as an Additional Language to identify need for EAL support.
- Close contact is maintained throughout the school with tutors, Divisional Heads and subject teachers with particular reference to :
 - Underperformance in class or exams
 - Behavioural issues
 - Slow writing
 - Verbal/written disparity

- Social isolation issues
- MidYis performances which are contradictory/concerning
- Organisational issues including missing deadlines

The report system is also used to pick up on possible issues with the students underperforming highlighted by Divisional Heads from grades and reports at the end of each grade period.

Assessment

Once highlighted as having a possible difficulty, the first steps are informal meetings with members of the LS department after consultation with tutor and parents. This may involve brief assessments such as SDMT testing, DASH assessment, or spelling screening. If necessary, a student without an existing Educational Psychologist's report or other relevant report may be tested within the school by our Specialist Teacher (HGS), referred to the School Counsellor or Health Centre and where it is required, referred to an outside agency. The school retains lists of Educational and Clinical Psychologists and uses the local CAMHS service when appropriate. Sally Kemp, Educational Psychologist, visits the school to assess students on campus when required and charges parents separately for this service. We have a good relationship with the Surrey and Kent Visual Impairment Departments and they come in to school to assess our provision annually free of charge. (See flow chart of School's response Appendix 2)

Monitoring and review

Once identified as having a Learning Support need or a disability, students are carefully monitored to ensure that they are having full access to the curriculum and any barriers to learning are being removed. The monitoring takes different forms:

- Within the usual curriculum, recording and reporting progress
- Monitoring by Learning Support staff

Within the usual curriculum, students are carefully monitored by teaching and pastoral staff through on-going assessment for learning, regular marking and the report system, which occurs half-termly. The students with SEN or disability are highlighted on the report system, and tutors feed back to the LS department with concerns or significant progress.

Divisional Heads report back to the LS department with the results of reports and highlight any individuals who are underperforming. Success is also conveyed. Parents are contacted regularly for feedback on progress. Parents' evenings are another more formal forum for monitoring and these occur annually.

The Learning Support teacher keeps a regular record of lessons given and progress made, including samples of work and grades. They also write reports on the system and monitor the grades and reports, feeding back to teachers and tutors as appropriate. After mocks and public examinations, the results are carefully looked at and published in the Learning Support Department annual review. This is followed up in a meeting with the Head and the Deputy Head of Teaching and Learning.

Statemented students (last statemented student left in 2012, currently no students with a statement)) follow a carefully monitored annual review system with parents, teachers and specialists present. IEPs are updated according to progress annually, both for statemented and non-statemented students. With the introduction of the new local authority EHC care plans in September 2014 we will review monitoring as necessary and when appropriate.

D. Sharing Information on students with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

Once identified as having an alternative need and once parents have been contacted, the student will be registered on Firefly under the Learning Support tab with the type of difficulty and strategies to help clearly labelled and accessible to staff. They will be highlighted on staff lists on iSAMS and any student receiving support will also appear on the report system, so that the help they receive and their difficulties are clearly identified. IEP's are sent electronically within the first half-term of the year to all teachers of students receiving learning support with the main challenges they face and a few key strategies for supporting them clearly outlined.

Staff have both formal and informal meetings with the Learning Support staff at break times. The Learning Support Department has an open door policy for staff to discuss concerns about students at any time. The Head of Learning Support attends Heads of Department meetings and the Pastoral Committee when appropriate. There is an annual Departmental Review to feed back to the SMT.

Complaints procedure

Should there be any complaints from parents of pupils with SEN, the Head of Learning Support should be informed first and if the matter is not resolved referred on to the Pastoral Deputy, the Head and if necessary the Governing Body.

E. Provision for those with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

Wave 1 support – in the classroom

Within the classroom all learners should be enabled to work to the best of their ability and this should involve a range of teaching strategies employed by the individual subject teacher to enhance the learning of the student with SEN or physical disability and to remove any barriers to their achievement.

To this end the Learning Support teachers will provide support to teachers and give guidance as to strategies and classroom management to best support alternative learners within the classroom. A range of tailored strategies is available on the Learning Support portal, on Firefly and on iSAMs and the IEPs which are sent to teachers (see appendix) should allow them to understand the difficulties faced by students and help them to tailor their teaching accordingly. This includes advice from experts such as the Visual Impairment advisors who monitor our visually impaired students. Wheelchair users (currently one pupil) have classes carefully timetabled to allow easiest access to lessons. The use of ICT in all departments allows teachers to, for example, send out complete copies of notes and lesson plans for students where required, and the Learning Support Platform (Firefly) will allow easy access to the curriculum from home. Many students use laptops in class as their standard way of working.

The learning support team provides INSET to departments and to staff-meetings to highlight needs and update colleagues on good practice. This occurs at the beginning of every year to the full staff meeting and then to individual departments. In 2015 AJM also gave INSET to the whole staff at the beginning of the Lent term. There is a tailored programme for new staff which AJM and HGS provide annually at the beginning of the Michaelmas term. Updates are given to boarding staff and pastoral staff e.g. Matrons Summer 2016, Support Staff Michaelmas 2016. There are frequent meetings about individual students with the staff who teach them, and visits to departmental meetings to advise on teaching specific students (e.g. Economics department; Geography English; Biology ; Modern Languages .

Extra-time, Word-processing and other access arrangements (in 2013 and 2015 enlarged papers for VI students) are allowed for students for classroom work, practical work, field trips and in exams in line with the regulations of the public exam boards. The Head of Learning Support maintains close contact with the examinations officer and monitors this carefully with help from the IB co-ordinator and the Examinations co-ordinator.

In line with the Children's Act, the Disability Act and the Equality Act every attempt is made to ensure that disabled pupils benefit from school trips and activities as much as other pupils and maximum inclusion remains our policy. However, sometimes it is necessary to offer an alternative activity, for example in sport certain students do tennis or sailing at no extra charge rather than rugby. Discussions between parents, the School and pupils will take place to ensure that activities are practicable and that any adaptations are reasonable.

Wave 2 support – extra group support

The school provides a Study Skills programme to support all students which begins in the Lower School and continues with a structured programme administered by tutors and Divisional Heads in the Middle School and Upper School. Tutors also reinforce this and follow up on individuals.

Individual departments provide support in small groups and individually where needed. There is a handwriting club run currently by PH in the English Dept. and targeted spelling programmes, alongside essay-writing help for year 11s. There are structured revision classes within departments prior to exams for all year groups and for the IB programme.

When there is a need for extra support for a group of individuals in a class, we occasionally provide teacher help in class. . We have instigated a support programme of Gifted and Talented students helping LS individuals in classes, in 2016 there were 70 students involved in this academic mentoring scheme and a successful peer support system in both sciences and Foreign Languages with L6 students supporting individual Year 10 students.

The learning support department offers an open-door policy and students can drop in at lunchtimes or breaks for help on an ad-hoc basis, for help with revising techniques or moral support.

Wave 3 support- individual support

When a student needs more individual help than that provided in Wave 1 and 2, the Learning Support Department will offer one-to-one help weekly and sometimes twice weekly to cater for their individual learning needs. This may involve study skills help, strategies to support their learning, memory, organisation , enhanced reading skills , note-taking, essay writing skills and developing their individual confidence and self-esteem. Some students will receive specialist dyslexic or dyspraxic support according to their difficulties. This is monitored carefully and provided while needed. Currently students are withdrawn from occasional RS lessons, Critical Thinking lessons or PSHE in the Lower and Middle School and the Upper School use their free lessons.

If more help is required with assessment or support, students may be referred to External agencies. (See below)

Students with EAL needs will receive weekly support to enhance their fluency in and comprehension of English as well as essay-writing help.

F. Staffing and Resources

Currently the School has one full-time teacher and four part-time teachers, including a Specialist Dyslexia teacher and an EAL specialist) working in the Learning Support Department. Other teachers give help with science subjects, language and study skills. We have part-time administrative help with a secretary.

However, Learning Support is a **school-wide responsibility** and all subject teachers, academic and pastoral colleagues are involved in the day to day provision of support and good practice to allow all learners to reach their maximum potential. Each department is encouraged to appoint a special needs ambassador and in 2017 we have teachers in Science, Languages English and Maths who help with Learning Support.

The pupil support is co-ordinated by the Head of Learning Support and the Pastoral Head oversees the provision. Eliza Ecclestone is the SEN Governor, appointed in February 2012. The Head of Learning Support attends Heads of Department meetings twice termly and the Pastoral Committee when appropriate. There is an annual Departmental Review to feed back to the SMT.

Learning Support staff are encouraged to attend training courses

G. Links with external agencies and provision for transition

When necessary, students may be recommended to external specialist bodies to give the extra support they need. This may involve Educational Psychologists, Counsellors, the School Counsellor and LEAs for statemented pupils (currently Surrey LEA). We recommend optometrists and touch-typing courses where relevant.

The School has traditionally had a good relationship with the Visual Impairment specialists at Surrey and Kent County Councils who have visited our VI students on site. Some of our students have been referred to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHs) in Tunbridge Wells.

When students move to other schools, the LS department writes references and provides records of support given for information and to ease the transition. References and advice is also given about transition to Higher Education in conjunction with the Higher Education Department of the school and the Access schemes run by universities. The Learning Support teacher is sometimes consulted to help with the UCAS reference. Students and tutors are encouraged to contact the Learning Support teacher for guidance in the application procedure with reference to SEN.

H. Contact with Parents

The Learning Support Department maintains close contact with parents at all times, from the identification of need and monitoring of provision. This may take the form of telephone conversations, emails and letters. More formally parents will receive notice of their child's progress and the help they receive via the report system and Learning Support teachers' attendance at parents' evenings. When necessary, parents are encouraged to come in to school for discussion with the relevant support teacher. The role of parents cannot be underestimated in continuing the support at home for their children.

There was and will be a formal annual review of all statemented pupils (or those with an EHC) which involves the parents.

Appendix: Form on Admissions

Prospective Pupil Name: Date of Birth:

Year of Entry:

| Aspects of disability and consequent difficulties | Reasonable adjustments | Further suggestions from parents | Decision place Yes/No Reasons Action steps if place given |
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SEVENOAKS SCHOOL
INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN Middle School

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|--|--|--|---|---------------------------|
| Name xxx | Year: 9 | Tutor Group: xxx | Date Issued: SEPT 11 | Review Date: NEXT YEAR |
| <p style="text-align: center;">STRENGTHS/INTERESTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly creative and original • Enjoys reading and writing • Verbally strong, • Good ICT skills • Good individual sense of humour • Polite and charming • Imaginative | <p style="text-align: center;">DIFFICULTIES</p> <p>Dyspraxia resulting in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor coordination, difficulties tying shoe laces/tie etc. • Long time to change for P.E etc. • Very untidy/slow handwriting/presentation skills and finds writing tiring • Poor organisational skills • Delay starting work • Distractibility and losing concentration | <p style="text-align: center;">FREQUENCY OF INDIVIDUAL HELP</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Weekly</p> | | |
| <p style="text-align: center;">TARGETS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop an independent way of organising himself • To find ways of keeping efficient notes • To cope with handing in work on time • To improve concentration and focus • To maintain motivation and self-esteem • To reduce stress and tiredness • To reduce disparity between ability and written work | <p style="text-align: center;">STRATEGIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of laptop for longer pieces of writing • Check on screen that he is following • Help him organise his notes • Extra Time for all work where necessary and in exams • Give xx short, achievable targets • Varied approach to teaching to keep concentration • Address by name • Check his homework diary regularly • Easy filing system in his bag • Praise and patience • Play to his imagination • Show examples of good work | <p style="text-align: center;">MONITORING</p> <p>Support teacher: AJM</p> <p>Tutor: xx</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">PROGRESS SINCE LAST REVIEW</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Xx has settled in well at the school. He is very happy here and is increasingly able to organise himself.</p> | |

FLOW CHART OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING SUPPORT

